



## TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD

### Minutes

#### West Hartford Prevention Council

Thursday, February 13, 2020 5:00pm – 6:00pm

Room 217

#### 1. Roll Call

##### a. Voting:

i. **Present:** Carl Shields, Jonathan Merritt, Jean Schensul, Kadzo Kangwana, Heather Alix, Howard Dashefsky, Nordia Napier

ii. **Absent:** Brenda McKeown

##### b. Ex-Officio:

i. **Present:** Amanda Martin, James Mahoney, Astrid Calderon, Helen Rubino-Turco, Ari Steinberg, Helen Drohan, Tor Fiske

ii. **Absent:**

c. **Guest:** Chris Dutton, Jacqueline Zea-Edgar, Keren Paquette, Michael Sinsigalli

#### 2. Approval of Minutes

a. Minutes of Meeting of January 9, 2020

b. Motion: no motion

c. Second: no second

d. Vote: 5-0, pass

#### 3. Council Vacancies

a. Need student representation; term would be extended for the school year

b. Opening for Substance abuse counselor role:

i. Resignation of Benjamin Grippo

ii. Taking nominations for this position

#### 4. Special Presentation

a. Hoarding and Safe Homes Task Force

i. Definitions of hoarding

ii. Animal hoarding

iii. Squalor

iv. What items are commonly collected?

v. Who hoards?

- Tend to be single, alone, high divorce rate

- Family history is common

- 3-5% of US population is affected

vi. Why do people hoard?

- Neurochemistry AND environmental factors

- Family chemistry

- Mental health

- Cognitive processing

vii. Difficulties to get rid of belongings

- Abnormalities in brain function
- Memories of objects and emotional attachments
- viii. Strengths of Hoarders
  - Creativity, responsibility
- ix. Treatment
  - No “gold standard” evidence based treatment
  - CBT, motivational interview
  - Group counseling/therapy
- x. “Clean outs” do not work
  - Fixes the problem, but not the symptom
  - Neglects underlying mental health issue
  - Problems can worsen
- xi. Why is this a public health problem?
  - Fire hazard, housing stability, infestation, etc
- b. Safe Homes Task Force
  - i. Health dept., Fire dept., Police and Animal Control, Social services, Building, Planning and Zoning
  - ii. Team oriented approach to supporting
  - iii. Communication/collaboration with other sectors has been helpful
  - iv. Much better prepared to handle hoarding cases today than 5 years ago
- c. Why a Task force?
  - i. Little insight into problem, high levels of anxiety with this population
  - ii. Right of entry
- d. Self Help support group: Buried in Treasures
  - i. Free 15 week help and support group
  - ii. When: Tuesdays from 1:30-3:00, beginning March 17
  - iii. Where: West Hartford Town Hall, Room 422

## 5. Old Business:

- a. Update on Needs Assessment
  - i. Meeting with Matt Hart to talk strategies
  - ii. Pick a topic (ie Panhandling)
  - iii. Begin possibly starting at Hillcrest Neighborhood, not the whole town
  - iv. Carl Shields to do research into data from Hartford Hospital
- b. Prevention Week Activities
  - i. Brainstorming sessions have been successful
  - ii. Activities are planned for each day from Monday, May 11 – Friday, May 15, 2020.
  - iii. Separate action planning sessions are necessary as to not take over time from WHPC official meetings
  - iv. Questions over the themes of some of the days: “Preventing Youth Tobacco Use” at the HANOC Block Party – there is a concern that this should be used in our planning, but not for advertising
  - v. National Prevention Week planning sheet handed out

## 6. New Business:

- a. Social Services Update: ACT Aids CT is planning to meet with West Hartford and Bloomfield Social Services
- b. West Hartford Public Schools / Board of Ed
  - i. Promise presentations in middle and high schools
  - ii. Working with Chris Dutton for SMART recovery group on the Conard Campus
  - iii. Appreciate mentoring and other opportunities the Bridge has been providing for students in the schools
- c. YSB Report
  - i. SMART group will be up and running at Conard campus soon
    - SMART Recovery Group: Substance abuse prevention support group for teens and families
  - ii. Prevention for tweens/teens by way of parents: 2 parent workshops being held at HANOC
    - Feb. 27, 2020 Parent talk:
      - Vaping, substance use, video games, etc – how to talk to your kids about these issues without alienating
      - Flyers will be distributed via email
  - iii. West Hartford Teen Center is coordinating a fundraiser at Veteran's Memorial Ice Rink on February 21, 2020 from 7-8:30pm during the DJ Skate. Flyers were distributed.
- d. West Hartford Prevention Partnership:
  - i. Completed work on the Alcohol section of the High School Data Survey; data for that section will be ready to report
- e. Working on Prevention Week activities and Celebrate West Hartford event

## **7. Adjournment**

- a. Motion: Jean Schensul
- b. Second: Carl Shields
- c. Vote: 5-0 in favor, passed.

Next meeting: Thursday March 12, 5 PM- 6 PM; **Room 217**

**ANY INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY WHO NEEDS SPECIAL ASSISTANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MEETING SHOULD CONTACT SUZANNE OSLANDER, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES AT 860-561-7570, FIVE DAYS PRIOR TO THE MEETING.**